

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, March 20. 1694.

The Ladies Dictionary being publisht yesterday, we think we can't better Oblige the World at this time, than give the Fair Sex some small Account of it, which we find ready done to our Hands by way of Extract in the Compleat Library for February, 1694. which without any Alteration is Verbatim, as follows:

Considering the great use of such a Book, it is a wonder to me that no body has attempted it before now. All the Dictionaries we now have, are for things of particular use, and some for matters of no great importance; but the Design of this is Universal, and concerns no less than the whole Sex. Of Men, in some regard, but of Women, so perfectly and nearly, that I cannot see how they can be without it, in all their concerns of Business, Life, Houses and Conversation. It is a good History of Women, and contains a great deal of excellent Learning upon that Subject, unknown not only to Women, but to the greater part of Men, and many other parts of useful Learning, which are fit to exercise the best Capacities; and besides it is written in a smart, pleasant and witty Style, and with so flowing an Eloquence, that you would always believe the Author capable of saying much more upon a Subject than he do's. But for Women, 'tis a Secret Oracle to consult upon all the incidents of Affairs, even from Childhood to Old Age, from the Court to the Cottage, from Pallaces to Country Houses, from the Lady at her Toilet, to the Cook-maid in the Kitchen. For here is not only an Explication of that endless Fargon of Names, whether French, Arabick or Hebræan, that compose that Learned System of the Attire, and Dressing-Box; but also the Affairs of Cookery, Dishes, Carving, Behaviour at the Table, and abundance of other things of the like Nature; you will find also many extraordinary Secrets communicated to the Author from Private Hands. The Arguments pro and con, in all the Disputes concerning the Fair Sex are truly stated, and abundance of Cases clearly and fully solv'd, that have hitherto tormented the Fair Sex. You will here see as in a Mirror, the lively Ideas of all Laudable Qualities whatsoever, suitable to either Sex, of all callings and conditions. Here you may observe the profoundest Learning and Divine Contemplation in the Prophecies of the Sybills, &c. Here are erected the Trophies of Female Fortitude and Valour, in several Instances. Here Queens may learn the Arts of Splendour and Magnificence, in various and eminent Examples. Wives here may read how to demean themselves toward their Husbands in all Conjugal affection: Daughters may here be taught Examples of Obedience and Chastity, and Matrons may here find that decent Deportment which becomes their Gravity, and Widows that Constancy which befits their Solitude. Here is also to be found the true Interpretation and Etymology of Womens Names, with so plain a Derivation of each Name, whether Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriack, Greek, or Latin, &c. that every ordinary Capacity may understand them.

'Tis true, that sometimes he doth expose, and lay open the Frailties of the Sex: But however, this could not be avoided, if he would be impartial; for all the World knows, that some of the Sex have Faults; and to be altogether silent, would make his Book nothing but a Piece of Flattery, written rather to fawn and please than to be of any good Design or Use; would make it like a false Glass, and not a true Mirror, which represents right and just Images to the World. And after all, it doth not hurt the good and virtuous, but rather brightens and adds a further lustre to them, for *Contraria juxta seposita magis Elucescunt*. And we should not know

Virtue at all, but for the Opposition of Vice, nor the Beauty, Excellency and Advantage of the one, but by the Deformity, Mischief and Injury of the other.

As for the Author of the Book, I know him not, but whoever he is, he seems to be cut out on purpose for such a Business, for one may find him quite through the Book to be a Man of great Experience in Female Affairs, and very well vers'd in the deep, hidden and profound Mysteries of Love Intreagues, Amours, &c. And he hath done it with so much Wit, with so smart and feeling an Air, whether he Commends the Sex, tells a Story, or reproves a Vice, as shews him to have Commenc'd M^r. of Arts that way. So that for a taste, I think it is very convenient to give some Instances out of the Book it self.

In the words of the Author, concerning LOVE, in p. 449. he has the following Expressions, viz. "He is a reproach to his Parents, who shuns the Entertainments of Hymen, and the Blissful Amours of the Fair Sex, without which he himself had not gain'd so much as the least of a Cypher in the Numeration of Mankind, though he now makes a Figure too much in Natures Arithmetick, since he would put a stop to the Rule of Multiplication. He is worse than Numa Pompilius, who appointed but a set Number of Virgins, and those were free to Marry, after they had guarded the sacred Fires the term of four Years. For my part (adds our Author) I should esteem the World but a Desert, were it not for the society of the Fair Sex, and the most polish'd part of mankind would appear but Hermits in Masquerade, or a kind of Civiliz'd Savys; so imperfect and unaccomplish'd is our Virility without the reunion of our lost rib, that substantial and integral part of our selves. Those who are dis-joynted from Women, seem to inherit Adam's Dreams, out of which nothing can awake them, but the Embraces of their own Living Image. They are always in Slumbers and Trances, ever seperated from themselves in a wild pursuit of an intolerable Loss: nor can any thing fix their Volatile Desires, but the powerful Magnetism of some Charming Daughter of Eve. They are the Guardians of our Infancy, the Life and Soul of our Youth, the Companions of our Riper Years, and the Cherishers of our Old Age. From the Cradle to the Tomb, we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them, for their Love and Good Offices. And he is a Monster in Nature, who returns them not the Carelles of an Innocent affection. Love is the Soul of the World, the Vital Prop of the Elements; 'tis the Cement of Humane Society, and the strongest Fence of Nature. Earth would be an Hell without it; neither can there be any Heaven where this is absent. And a little after, (he adds) It is disingenuous to rob Vertue of the Advantages it receives from Beauty, which makes it appear like Diamonds incas'd in Gold, and gives it a greater Lustre. Reason it self will appear more Eloquent in the mouth of a Fair Maid, than in that of the most florid Orator. And there are no Figures in all the System of Rhetorick, so moving, and forcible, as the Peculiar Graces of that Sex. I am of Opinion, That Men can boast of no Endowments of the mind, which Women possess not in as great, if not a greater Eminency. There hath been Musas as well as Amazons; and no Age, nor Nation, but has produc'd some Females, Renown'd for their Wisdom or Vertue; Which makes me conclude, that the Conversation of Women is no less useful than pleasant; and that the Dangers which attend their Friendships, or Commerce, are out-ballanc'd by vast Advantages.

In the word Foreign Project to provide Maids with Husbands, in pag. 336. "It may justly astonish us (says our Author) to consider how Industrious and Careful so wise and great a State as that of Athens was,

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